POP MUSIC DOCUMENTARY AT NUART

Even when aggravating, films on the punk and post-punk movements in pop music have usually been valuable. Capturing this subculture on celluloid isn't an easy task, so one is grateful not only for eye-opening successes like "The Decline of Western Civilization" and "The Great Rock & Roll Swindle," but even such bungled attempts as "D.O.A."

But if there's a limit to your tolerance for sloppy film making and haphazard casting in this genre, it might well be defined by "Listen to London."

This documentary, screening tonight at the Nuart, was made in Britain in the spring of 1981 by Steve Sattler and Desmond Horsfield and concentrates on performances and comments by 14 new, mainly obscure bands. We also get a scattering of remarks from fans who seem to have been chosen for the glaze over their eyes, some astute observations from author-deejay Charlie Gillet and an initially enticing but finally unrevealing look inside the important independent record company Rough Trade (if you don't blink you might see Claude (Kickboy) Bessy, former editor of L.A. punkzine Slash).

You'd think that with 14 new groups in the most volatile rock city in the world, you'd get at least an interesting if uneven movie. No such luck. There are moments of mild pleasure or promise. A look at the Thompson Twins (the only one of these bands to gain popularity) before they slickened their sound is fairly interesting, a group called Kan Kan makes satisfactory tribal noise, and Bim's ska-pop is OK, as is the Squeeze-like pop of New Musik.

But it's tougher to find anything nice to say about Almost Human, Rio and the Robots, 1-2-3, AWOL, Heartbeats, Calling Hearts (men in sequined dresses and geisha hairdos playing chaotic psychedelia), the Distractions, Papers or Manufactured Romance. They're not helped by the poor, trembly sound or the home-movie camera work.

Showing with "Listen to London" is "The Kids Are United," a documentary of a 1978 British festival featuring the Jam, Sham 69 and Penetration.

—TERRY ATKINSON

'ANARCHIST' CAST LIST GROWS

Tony Azito, Andrew Bloch, John Carpenter, Jacque Lynn Colton, Paul E. Richards and Tom Toner have joined Ned Beatty in the cast of "Accidental Death of an Anarchist," to be presented at the Mark Taper Forum Jan. 20-March 6.

Directed by Mel Shapiro, the production is the third in the forum's 16th season.

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Sonia Braga is the LADY ON THE BUS (R) 12:40 2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20	Peter O'Toole in MY FAVORITE YEAR (PG) 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
Winner Best Film 1982 Cannes Film Festival YOL (PG)	Meryl Streep, Roy Scheider in STILL OF THE NIGHT (PG)
COME BACK TO THE FIVE & DIME JIMMY DEAN, JIMMY DEAN	Bertrand Tavernier's COUP DE TORCHON (R)
EATING RAOUL (R)	YOL (PG)
EATING RAOUL (R)	Sonia Braga is the LADY ON THE BUS (R) 1:15 3:30 5:45 8:00 10:15
Philippe Noiret, Isabelle Huppert COUP DE TORCHON 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00	Sonia Braga is the LADY ON THE BUS (R) 1:15 3:30 5:45 8:00 10:15

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